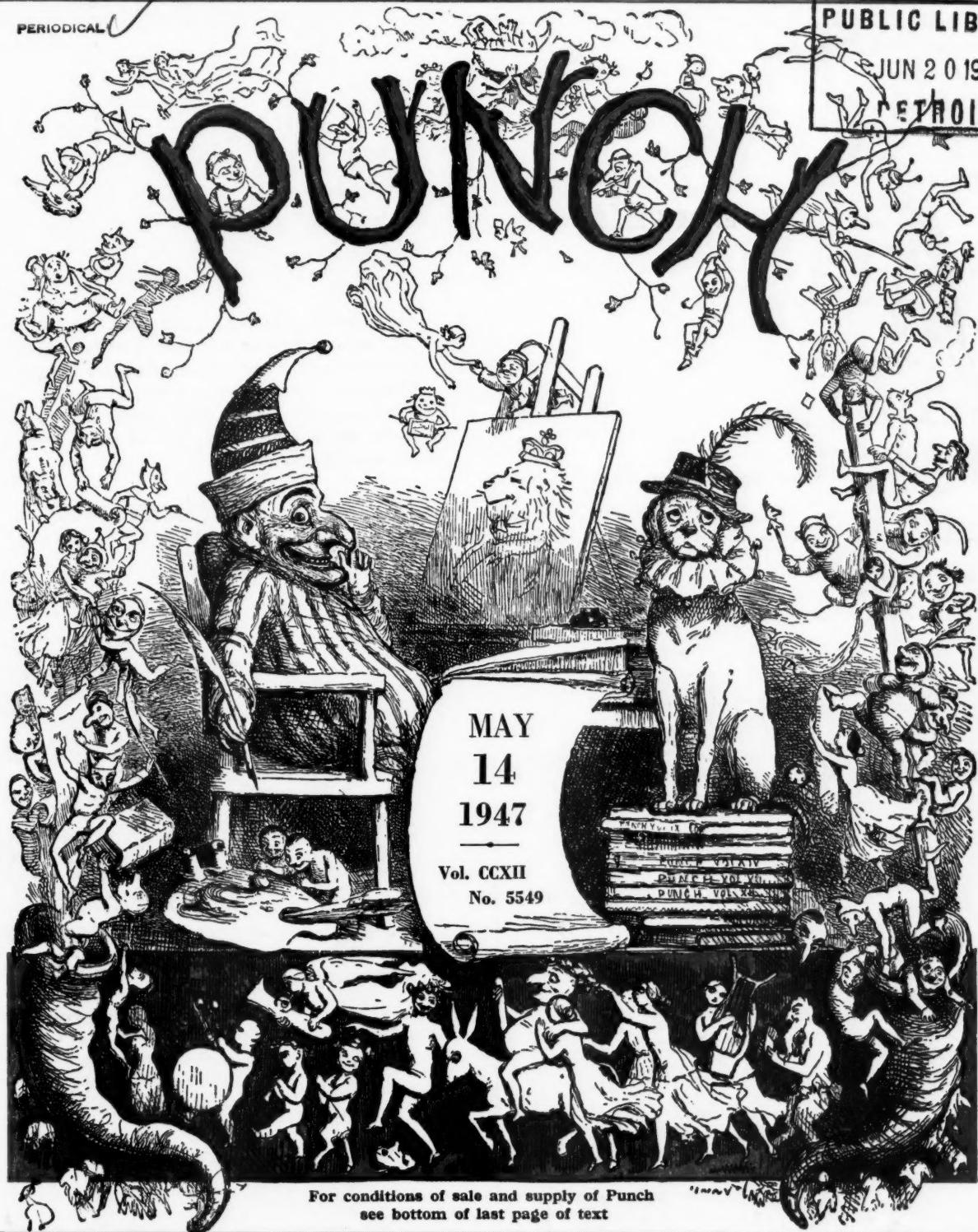


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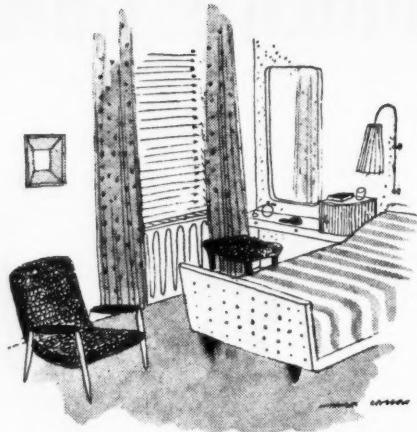
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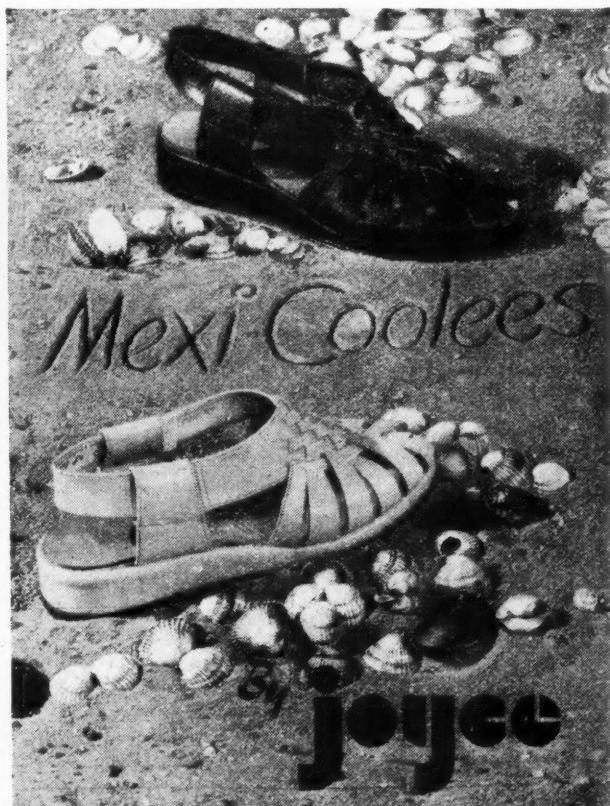
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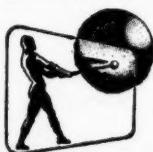


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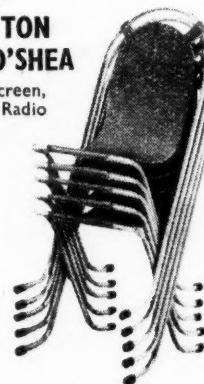


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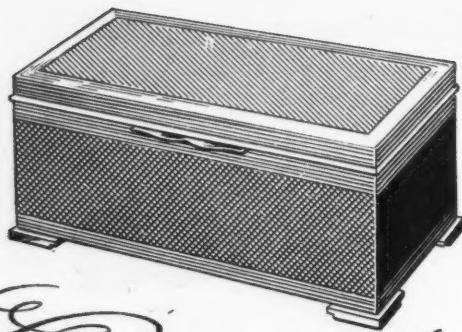
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There's not only colour in my garden, Mr. Barratt, it's blossoming forth in your lovely new fashion-shoes. When I found that your manager had got a pair in the shop that were simply *mine*, I went home as happy as a skylark!

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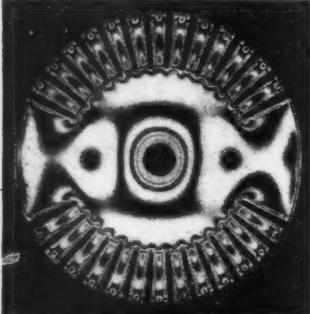
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PUNCH

Or
The London Charivari



Vol. CCXII No. 5549

May 14 1947

Charivaria

THERE was a long queue outside the Lost Property office at a London railway station. This led to a rumour that nationalization had arrived and shareholders were making inquiries.

A cigarette which produces a pretty green ash is popular with American women. It also keeps moths out of billiards table cloths.



"Go miles away and forget everything," runs a holiday hint. With just one proviso—try to remember the tickets.

The Paris - Istanbul express is resuming its sleeping-car service. Application for reservations are pouring in from writers of spy-thrillers.

Shortage of timber is one reason for overcrowding. Government slogans positively jostle one another on the hoardings.

A hostess complains that she is finding it impossible to replace her cutlery. A frank appeal to the guests to do so appears to be the only solution.

An Essex debating society resolution that husbands should help with the housework was carried almost unanimously—the only dissentient being a man. He was told to dry up.

A new uniform is to be designed for the British policeman. It is felt that the old one is too readily recognizable.

According to a business man, most salesmen are as boastful as anglers. We gather that some of them spin the most fantastic yarns of the customers they have just managed to get away from.

"The children had been dismissed for lunch when the fire broke out. The cause, which was discovered by a passer-by, is not yet known."—*Evening paper*. So he won't talk, eh?

A naturalist says no one is able to explain why larks go up and up for no apparent reason.... The same thing of course applies to rates and taxes.

The rumour is spreading that many tobacconists are now keeping regular customers under the counter.

Our Filthy Lucre

"Mr. Hugh Dalton, Chancellor of the Exchequer, has a poisoned finger, and his hand was in a sling last night."—*Daily Mail*.

The police report that the majority of things lost at Wembley on Cup Final day are being sent to their rightful owners by mail. The Burnley team are said to be expecting the postman to arrive with the Cup any day now.



St. Paul's

COMING from the Elysian shade
Where the makers of ancient cities
Still carry on their trade
Without the help of committees,
"I liked my first plan," said Wren,
"But the Great Fire came and stopped it.
I liked my second, but then
The Dean refused to adopt it.
I did not care for my third,
But the Monarch gave me permission
To change what I found absurd,
So we have the present edition.
It has satisfied most inquiries
And I like what they wrote about me,

This 'Si monumentum requiris,
Circumspice.'
But I take a most dismal view
Of the Bankside Power Station.
Is that the best they can do
On the top of a big conflagration?
If anyone is not annoyed,"
He said, looking over the craters,
"It must be the men employed
As electrical generators:
For they, whatsoever befalls
To hinder their work or to busy 'em,
Will have nothing to see but St. Paul's."
He then went back to Elysium. EVOE.

Enough to Make an Ironmonger Laugh.

A PATCH of grass in my front garden has been a trouble to me for some time. It is the business of grass to grow vertically, so that the blades of a mowing-machine can nip it cleanly off in the proper manner and whirl it into the container. But this grass grows horizontally in long streamers, as though it lived constantly in a wind-tunnel, and can be raised in great swathes to expose a nauseating baldness underneath. Slimy things live there. I blame the war. Uncut for years the grass grew tall and rank. Then a bomb came, I think, and the grass fell down and stayed down. Perhaps it didn't hear the All-Clear. But there it lies, coarse, matted, incorrigible, green on top, brown and beastly underneath, a covering fit only for the loathsome squatters it shelters. I took a tentative snip at it with the shears and found that it touched the ground only at rare intervals—I mean it had about one root to the square yard—so that if I went on clipping I should be left with a series of disconnected brown tufts or tussocks in an otherwise bald and unconvincing square of earth. I did not want my patch of grass to look like the conventional symbols for marshy land on an ordnance map. I wanted it to look fresh and green, with alternate light and dark lines where the mower had been.

So I went to see Hoskins.

Hoskins has more merchandise hanging from his ceiling than any ironmonger I ever knew. He gets a stiff neck periodically and then you know he has been stock-taking. But he is a friendly man and sells everything for the house and garden.

"Grass seed?" he said. "Yes. What kind of seed did you require?"

"Grass," I told him.

"It's a matter of the mixture," he explained. "There are different mixtures for the different purposes, you see."

"Oh, I don't want anything mixed with it," I said. "Just grass."

He took no notice of this. "For cricket outfields, now," he said, leaning his elbows on the counter, "we recommend a high proportion of rye, say fifty, with a quarter Hard Fescue and five or ten each Meadow Grass and Crested Dog's Tail. I like a little Fiorin myself, for hard wear, but you can't get it."

"I see," I began. "Things are difficult . . ."

"Been on order for months. But what can you do? Of course if it's more of a tennis lawn you're thinking of——" "Well——" I said.

"You don't want no rye. Twenty-five Sheep's Fescue, twenty Hard, and say fifteen each Fine Leaved Sheep, Dog's Tail, and Smooth and Rough Stalked Meadow——"

"Fifteen what?" I asked.

"Parts. Per cent., you might say. It's all according."

"Wait a minute," I said. "Twenty-five Sheep's—and twenty—and say fifteen each—that's one hundred and five. You're giving me a bit over."

"How much did you want? For a tennis lawn, now, at $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 the rod, allowing plenty of run-back, let me see——"

"It's not really a—it's just for a patch really. Only," I added hastily, "I want it to be good. Fresh and green, you know. I mean, if you would recommend all Sheep's Fescue, I wouldn't mind paying a bit extra—as the quantity won't be large."

"Ah," he said. "General purpose." (General purpose of course! So much, much more soothing than "for a patch.") "In that case perhaps, a little clover?"

"Clover!" I cried. I have always understood that clover was the kind of thing you tried to get out of a lawn, and it shocked me to hear Hoskins deliberately trying to put it in.

"Only a little, mind," he said gravely. "Not more than two pounds to the acre, best white, you don't want."

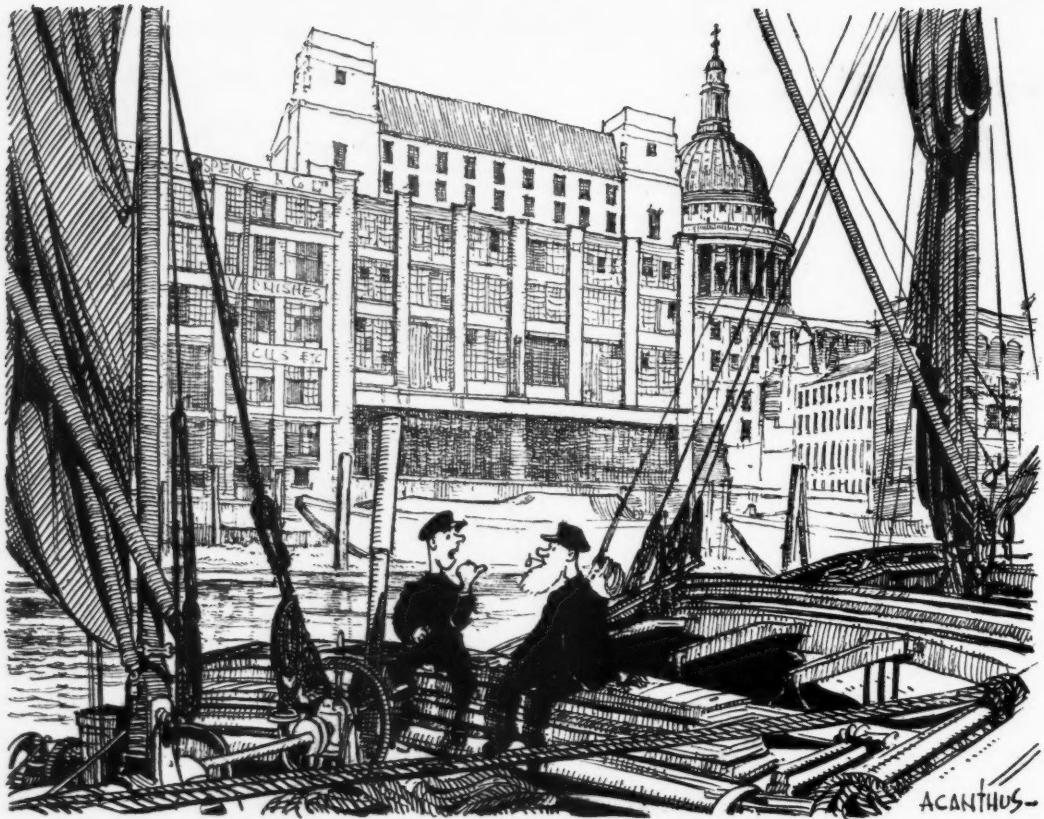
I promised not to overdo the clover. In fact, I said, I was prepared to cut it out altogether, in view of the small area to be covered—much less than an acre, not a quarter, only about six yards square in fact—and go flat out for Sheep's Fescue, if that would be all right.

He wouldn't hear of it. He brushed the idea aside as if a lawn made of solid Sheep's Fescue was the wildest, the most extravagant lunacy. "Why not have it all Crested Dog while you are about it?" he asked, and shook with laughter as at some tremendous joke. "Or Fiorin!" he added, and beat his fists against the counter in a sort of ecstasy.

I cannot see the point of this. If I am allowed twenty-five Sheep's Fescue, why shouldn't I have a hundred? If every blade of grass in my patch was of the same kind and grew the same size and at the same rate, surely I should



THE UNBALANCED LEDGER



"'Ow would you like St. Paul's blotted out by a perishin' great power station?"'

have a lawn that would be the envy of gardeners for miles around? "Oh, that," I should say to inquirers. "Yes. It's all Sheep's Fescue, of course." And they would go home and root out every blade of Smooth Stalked Meadow Grass and Hard Fescue and Fiorin and all the other rubbish that was cluttering up their lawns. But this sort of argument is absolutely wasted on old Hoskins. He simply doubles up over a boxful of assorted bolts and says it's the best thing he has come across in years. He must lead a dullish sort of life, it seems to me.

The upshot of all this was that I bought four pounds of seed in a little white bag. It had the name of a famous firm on the outside and was inscribed, quite simply, "LAWN SEED." Not a word on it about Crested Dog's Tail or anything else.

"You recommend this?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," he said. "You won't do much better than that."

"Not even if you mixed it yourself?" I asked, smiling.

"Oh, we don't make up here," he said coolly. "Not worth it in this class of business."

"In that case," I began, "I don't see the point of all that—" But why quarrel with the man? Instead, I let him sell me some bits of tin that made a tinkling noise when the wind was favourable.

"That'll scare 'em," he said. "You don't want the birds to eat up all that Sheep's Fescue of yours, do you now?"

I left him wiping his eyes, the fool.

H. F. E.

Non Tali Auxilio

(An Australian professor has suggested that people should be required to pass a crossword test before being allowed to vote.)

WHAT, sir! Shall no man share the rights of nations,
Shall no man choose the rulers of his home
Save he be skilled to spot obscure quotations
And run to earth the tortuous palindrome?

That is a game wherein the loftiest sages,
Professors too, may prove a total loss;
The brains that hold the wisdom of the ages
May find no answer to 14 across.

Grave lecturers on Europe : The Solution
Have toiled in vain at "Pots end up in dam,"
And experts on the Russian constitution
Sat dumb before "is veto (anagram)."

Not these the lines that true success is built on,
The cosmic ills contemn your idle dope.
The clue to peace is not "— and Quiet" (Milton);
We nurse a braver "— springs eternal" (Pope)."

When fears oppress and troubles loom enormous
We still prefer the trodden paths we know:
Our newspapers, as always, will inform us
In which white square our letter X should go. M. H. L.

The Royal Academy

A PART from a brilliant display by the President, a couple of commemorative PIERRE BONNARDS, and some exquisite low-toned pictures in the Euston Road tradition, this year's summer exhibition of the Royal Academy is not perhaps an especially memorable one for students of art, though the public may remember it as the occasion when Mr. CHURCHILL made his *début* in "another House."

But the exhibition can justly claim several negative virtues. There are very few execrable works, no State portraits in an outworn academic tradition, and only three or four "problem pictures"—the best of these, F. W. ELWELL'S "I dreamt St. Peter sat for his Portrait" (showing G. B. S. disguised as the Apostle posing for an artist reminiscent of Vermeer's mirrored self-portrait) being a highly successful excursion in a dangerous field. Nor, for that matter, can one single out a "picture of the year," though Dame LAURA KNIGHT'S vast "No. 1 Dressing Room" has the customary place of honour in the Third Gallery. Unhappily this painting exhibits a certain coarseness of feeling which has become embarrassingly evident in her large-scale canvases of back-stage circus life and, while it would be presumptuous to plead with this gifted artist to abandon a manner which evidently has its admirers, one might contrast it with VERA LOE'S little picture of a dancer—a more refined and sensitive work, if also more directly inspired by Degas.

A striking feature of this year's Academy is the large number of portraits. None of them has the absolute assurance, the *inevitability* which characterizes a work of genius (almost any portrait by Velazquez, let us say, or Whistler's Portrait of his Mother), but RODRIGO MOYNIHAN has a number of serene and beautifully observed heads, including a portrait of Princess Elizabeth, so intimate and unassuming that the title "Lady in a Blue Dress" might hardly have caused comment. In this, as in his penetrating studies of Viscount Bearsted and Rose Pitman, MOYNIHAN uses most skilfully a background of olive green.

HENRY LAMB rarely disappoints, and among his half-dozen works the portrait of Michael Hope in battle-dress is a reminder of his valuable work as an official war artist; WILLIAM DRING has done full justice to a captivating subject in "Sir Nicholas Nuttall, Bt.," an auburn-headed boy with a gun under his arm, and A. HAYWARD has a remarkably effective portrait of "The Artist," observing the spectator over his left shoulder, which boldly challenges comparison with an almost identical pose of Orpen's.

Unquestionably the most arresting portrait is JAMES GUNN'S "Sir William Y. Darling" . . . (I omit orders, degrees and decorations, though the artist leaves nothing to the imagination.) Photographic realism could, in fact, go no further; and this astonishingly glossy technique has been GUNN'S for so long that it is not unfair to remark that his method shows no advance whatever on his treatment of the memorable "Chesterton-Belloc-Baring" group of a much earlier Academy. But the painting is undeniably a *tour de force*, and the sleek figure is effectively posed against a black background, relieved by a coat of arms, in the manner of the late Maurice Greiffenhagen.

Before coming to what, to my mind, is the cream of the exhibition, let me urge the reader to mark these works in the catalogue lest they be overlooked: RUSKIN SPEAR'S "Snow Scene" (10), "Fish-market, Dieppe" (a gay rendering of a drab scene), by LE BAS (54), J. NAPPER'S exquisite "Girl putting on her Shoe" (239), "The Drum Shop"—a characteristic JOHN COLE (494), WALTER DEXTER'S

"King's Lynn" (585), CHARLES SPENCELAYH'S meticulous "Telegram" (607), and CHARLES GINNER'S "Lancaster" (616). If it be not *lèse-opposition-de-sa-Majesté*, perhaps it would be well to suggest that Mr. CHURCHILL'S two entries (57 and 174) be also underlined in advance, for it is difficult to believe that these unremarkable little works would attract attention without reference to the catalogue. The great man is simply enjoying himself with a brush, just as he used joyfully to handle a trowel, and a future biographer need not devote more than a page or two to this delightful hobby.

Most people will surely agree that this year the President, Sir ALFRED MUNNINGS, is at the top of his inimitable form. With a fluent brush loaded with pure colour he tackles his great racing pictures with a mastery matched only by Stubbs and Ben Marshall. The most noble and animated of the canvases—"Saddling Paddock, Cheltenham March Meeting," and "Sketch of a Newmarket Start"—shimmer with light and atmosphere, and the staccato effect of racing colours is exceedingly effective.

The water-colours seem to fall slightly below their usual level of excellence, but there are at least a dozen of the first order. RUSSELL FLINT'S imaginative "Rococo Landscape," painted with an overflowing brush, is paired with CHARLES GINNER'S unemotional, precise but very telling "Embankment Railings"; and elsewhere in the South Rooms KENNETH BROWNE'S magnificent pastel head of "Nafar Mohammed Dongola," M. REILLY'S tempera "March Evening," and LEONARD SQUIRRELL'S "Ely"—in the nineteenth-century English water-colour school tradition—are gems of their kind.

The drawings, engravings and etchings have long been a notable feature of the Academy, though critics have been rather inclined to neglect them. RUSSELL FLINT'S "Romantic Composition" in sanguine, an exquisite study of poses; "The Darent at Brasted," a carbon pencil drawing by CHARLES GODDEN (who has profitably studied Fred Walker and other illustrators of the 'sixties); ROBERT AUSTIN'S austere drawing of "Choir Boys," and an entrancing little aquatint by W. P. ROBINS are only a few of the works which should enhance the prestige our graphic art enjoys abroad.

Of the sculptures there is space only to draw attention to WHITNEY-SMITH'S capital bust of the President—a finely modelled head and a speaking likeness—and a sensitive statuette by RICHARD GARBE. The architectural designs are mostly rather unexciting; but perhaps next year we shall have a model of the Bankside Power Station, a thing of beauty and a joy for thirty years.

N. A. D. W.

○ ○

In Memoriam : H.M.S. "Warspite"

"SO the old ship's gone, Ginger" . . . "Ay, so they say.
Piled herself up on the rocks somewhere" . . .
"Well, it was the best way."

"Rummy, isn't it, how a ship always seems to know
When she's bound for the knacker's yard . . ." "Ay, it
is so."

"Well, she was a good old ship. I knew her many a year,
And I'm glad she's cheated the breakers at the finish . . ."
"Same here . . ." C. F. S.

THE story of *The Farmer's Daughter* (Director: H.C. POTTER) has a good deal to do with politics—but only in a very general way; after all, you couldn't expect the film-makers to take the bold step of identifying the sympathetic characters so closely with one political side that all adherents of the other would automatically stay away from the film and denounce it. Thus we find no political labels except "the party" and "the opposition party"—and even the Ku Klux Klan, which appears to be the real villain of the piece, is only identified by implication (somebody's hat is referred to as his "hood"), and remains anonymous under the all-embracing word "Fascism." The fable itself is more or less unbelievable, a fairy-story of the kind that Hollywood likes most, and it is

At the Pictures

POLITICAL FAIRY-STORY

occasionally), is swindled out of the money she has saved to pay for training as a nurse, and cheerfully takes a job as cook-housemaid—and a real treasure she is—to a young Congressman (JOSEPH COTTEN). The chief incredible point is that, because of her sincerity and natural, unpretentious, conversational, "human" oratorical style—and incidentally because she looks like LORETTA YOUNG—she succeeds in getting elected to Congress herself, defeating the loud-mouthed demagogues; and this even after we have been shown the way in which (because of the stupidity of crowds at political meetings, who will cheer anything, even "Fish for sale!" or double-talk) demagogic works. The pleasure to be got from this piece is in the great skill with which it is handled. The party scene and the scene (and the montage sequence) of ballyhoo at the political rally are very cleverly done. There are certain pictures, and this is one, that seem to be less and less worthy of serious notice the more one considers them afterwards, but that were undoubtedly very efficient sources of entertainment at the time. It all depends what you demand of a film—and whether you sternly demand it of every film.

Seeing *Le Déseurteur* (Director: LÉONIDE MOGUY) for the first time, one can't help

wondering how different is its impression now from that it might have produced when it was made, in 1938. For this is a little story of the other war, an incident the narration of which takes almost exactly as long as the incident itself—if that's the way to put it. In essentials it is very simple:

a trainful of troops going into the line is held up for two hours, and one man seizes the chance to visit his home and find out why he has heard nothing of his girl. But when there is a brief air-raid on the village concerned one is distracted by the irrelevant temptation to compare the details of the two wars . . . It should be resisted. In spite of its leisurely pace the film is nearly all good, only the last few minutes seeming false and forced towards a "happy ending." What an immense difference attention to detail makes! It is almost pointless to say this, for practically all the French films we see are crammed with perfectly-observed and satisfying detail; nevertheless there are still too many British pictures the whole trouble with which can be traced to somebody's ignoring its importance. JEAN-PIERRE AUMONT does well as "the deserter," and as usual in French films the small-part players are admirable; still one's greatest pleasure comes from the authenticity of the group scenes and the fact that most of the shots are not only credible as glimpses of reality but also designed to look well as pictures within the frame of the screen.

The Beginning or the End (Director: NORMAN TAUROG) is the dramatized story of what I am coming to think of as the atahmic bahm. We are warned at the start that, for security and another reason I forget, "some rearrangement of chronology and fictionization was necessary"; whether there need have been quite as much "fictionization" as we get is debatable.

Apart from the customary interruption of the narrative by irrelevant personal love-affairs, the film suffers from the tendency—perhaps inevitable in any treatment of this theme—of so many characters to assume a far-away look and indulge in a string of pompous clichés about the enormous power ("for good or ill") with which they are dealing, or the steps they are taking to promote the investigation of it. But I won't venture to speak for the audience of the twenty-fifth century, at whom the picture is said to be particularly aimed.

There are a good many impressively well-managed scenes, but the most memorable is the one we have seen before, the picture that was shot by no human cameraman—the mushroom of the first atomic explosion in New Mexico. It's a temptation to say that the sound effects and the music accompanying this sequence weaken it, but I don't think they do. R. M.



[*The Farmer's Daughter*

POLITICAL HOUSEMAID

Katrin LORETTA YOUNG

full of quite calculated effects inserted for no other reason than that they will please the largest number of paying customers; but within its narrow limits the film is well done and entertaining. LORETTA YOUNG is "the farmer's daughter," who goes to the big city with a Swedish accent (which slips

Naval Document

From: *The Engineer Officer, H.M.S.
"Cordite" — in Chinese
waters.*

Date: *Believed to be 28th April (see
below).*

To: *The Commanding Officer, H.M.S.
"Cordite."*

Subject: *Calendars—Pad*

CONSIDERABLE inconvenience has been experienced by ship's officers owing to the omission to supply Calendars, Pad, for the current year (1947). Since no calendars were available for purchase ashore, it has been necessary to resort to various expedients to adapt the 1946 calendars for use in 1947. The 1946 editions arrived in *Cordite* in October, 1946, and were quite popular for the last three months of the year.

2. Much ingenuity has been exercised by various officers in adapting the 1946 calendars for use in 1947. Some of these are:

(a) Crossing out the figures below the day of each week, and subtracting one. This method has the advantage of keeping the Lessons for Matins and Evensong correct, but some difficulty is foreseen in adapting the 1948 leap-year calendar for use in 1949, when a new subtraction code integer must be devised.

(b) The clever expedient adopted by the Commanding Officer of finding a month in 1947 which starts on the same day of the week as another month in 1946. This only involves altering the month title, some forethought, tearing off the sheets, and clipping them together in the new order. Some confusion is likely to result to operational and other programmes towards the end of the month, should the days of the new month be printed on the same sheet as those of the old; or when the clip falls off. It also has the disadvantage from the point of view of the Ward Room Wine Caterer that some months appear longer than they should be. It is deduced that the probability of this method being useable in any two consecutive years is 487 to 1.

(c) A third method, frequently discussed in *The Times*, is that of retaining back calendars until a suitable year arrives when they can again be used with *exactly* the same days of the week occurring on the same dates. This method is unduly heavy on the expenditure of indiarubber, involves a measure of ballast compensation to allow for the weight of accumulated calendars, pad, carried: and for its successful application involves the



"Holy Smoke—this year's model!"

retention of the interested officers for a short period in the Service until the suitable year arrives.

3. None of the above methods, however, allows for the moveable Feasts of Easter, Whitsun, and the Conversion of St. Paul, which although not of great import to the Chinese way of life, are of some interest to executive officers of H.M. ships, and which must be looked up in a *really* accurate calendar. Some loss of face is, however, occasioned by failure to predict eclipses for the Chinese.

4. It is requested, accordingly, that H.M. Stationery Office be implored to become mobile, and to place orders at once for suitable calendars for the years 1949 *et seq.*, possibly economizing at the same time in such vital information at the back of the calendar as,

Truss of hay weighs (old) 56 lb.
Truss of hay weighs (new until
Sept. 1st) 60 lb.,

for which no immediate operational requirement can be foreseen until retirement from the Service in 1956 (for which a 1937 calendar can be used).

(Signed) W. SPANNER,
Commander (E.).

• • •
"A thief climbed a drain-pipe to get into the flat of 48-year-old Lord Justice Evershed, in Albany, Piccadilly, yesterday, and took clothes and jewellery valued at more than £1,000.

"Last week, he was appointed chairman of a committee to investigate Supreme Court procedure.

"He was on other Government committees before that, and was called to the Bar in 1923."—*Daily paper*.

What's this, then—just a hobby?



"Yes, sir. Had you any particular standard-of-living in mind?"

Remarks

THE fact that these remarks are being typed on orange paper with something else written upside down on the back tempts me to begin with a few words on typing-paper in general. Typing-paper in general is not orange but whitish, with coal and lumps of hard porridge ironed into it by the makers, who like thus to emphasize that we live in hard times—a point buyers of typing-paper would not dispute. It is interesting to watch these hardy folk at work in some little shop where the presence of anything whatever beyond the rarer weeklies is a toss-up. They are not afraid to take "no" for an answer because it wouldn't do any good if they were; besides, after they have asked for their typing-paper they still haven't played their trump card, which is the words "Not even foolscap?" spoken in the sort of voice that goes up with your eyebrows. (I should explain, for those who don't have to worry, that foolscap is the technical name for the big or wrong size.) Paper-buyers cling to the foolish hope that the average little shop does not recognize foolscap as typing-paper; and, when this ruse fails, that it holds a secret hoard of large writing-pads. It is not until they find themselves staring wildly at a packet of lace paper doilies that they know they are beat and that they must face the half-day's journey to the shop with the strange, coloured paper they are so glad to see.

Typing-paper with something else upside down on the back is distracting when first put into the typewriter, but becomes normal as the upside-down words are rolled out of sight. When taken from the machine it gets mixed up with the paper with something else written on both sides, if necessary travelling right across the desk or table. All typing-paper, whether already written on or not, is adjusted,

or wiggled straight, as soon as it is put into the typewriter, but only clever people know how to do this so quickly that a tuck appears down the middle of the page, or to pull the paper out with that skilful twist that tears it in half.

I THINK that is all I have to say about typing-paper. Now I can get on to what I was really meaning to start with—a few remarks on that section of humanity known as actors. There are too many illusions about actors, but I shall not try to dispel them.

Actors are either comedians or not, or alternatively either associated with music or not. Thus, by drawing a circle to represent all actors, and putting a down-stroke to divide funny actors from serious and an across-stroke to divide musical from not musical, you get a thing looking like a hot-cross-bun and quite useless. Even funny actors are inclined now and then to undertake powerful rôles so as to get paragraphs in the papers beforehand, and even serious actors have funny lines sometimes, because all plays have funny lines, so that the only sure distinction is whether they are allowed to sing with the orchestra or not. For actors in an ordinary play to sing a little song at the piano means no more than that they have sprung from musical comedies. Now for the main features of actors as a race.

ON the stage the main features of actors are these: the ability to light a cigarette, to forget they are holding it, and to find it still alight when they take the next pull; a tendency to lean on sofa-backs and a passion for dressing for dinner. They are quick and efficient letter-writers—how often have you seen an actor faced with a used stamp-book?—and should they play the piano they do it so well that you wonder no one ever suggests they ought to get a job in a dance band. Their hair is a tribute to their self-esteem; their books are arranged in absolutely straight rows and their window-curtains glide across the rails and overlap in the middle without the ends falling off, so that they never have to mount a chair and both telephone directories and knock the flower-jug over before they can consider themselves settled for the evening. Their coal fires don't look very happy but are good for nowadays, and they would never dream of not decanting the sherry. But their most characteristic features of all are their memories and vocal powers. It is doubtful to the public if during a whole play they take so much as one quick look at the print, because this would make them too much like ordinary people, and they have not only to get what they say in the right order but to fit their own words in between the words of the people speaking round them without pausing longer than for effect, and then not too long or the audience will start worrying. What is so wonderful to ordinary people is that they speak their words night after night not as if they knew them by heart but as keenly as people speak in everyday life, and with no mumbly or repeated bits either.

As for their vocal powers, I know it is fashionable to complain that modern actors are inaudible, but I should like my readers to try speaking from a stage to the back of the gallery without sounding as if they were standing at the foot of the stairs and shouting to the person in the bathroom to give the kitchen tap a chance. Let them think of that next time yet another critic compares modern actors with Irving. I cannot mention actors without mentioning Irving, for he above all is the actor people get blamed for being too young to have seen.

OFF the stage actors are even more interesting, their main feature here being the way they live in houses or flats next door to or opposite the people their houses or



"It's nice to know the old country is still the land of plenty."

flats are next door to or opposite to, investing their neighbours with a quality even their neighbours cannot define, but a sort of mixture of cleverness and luck. Besides living in houses or flats actors have to go to shops to buy things, and walk along roads, and hail taxis, and have their names in telephone directories, and do other extraordinary things, by which I mean things that would be ordinary for ordinary people. Psychologists have never been able to decide if the public would be less amazed or more if actors lived in, say, marquees on railway platforms, but they think probably more, because the public would hardly miss such a chance for incredulity.

Before leaving the subject of actors I must say how tenaciously the public holds to its abstract conception of an actor as a man in a fur-lined coat with an astrakhan collar. (The public has not decided if the whole coat is *actually* lined with astrakhan, but insists that there is some of this particular fur somewhere. Why, without this image it wouldn't know what to see when it hears the word.) Whether more actors than even the public really believes do wear fur-lined coats statisticians are unable to tell us, but they think it in keeping. Actors, they say, want to keep warm like anyone else, and the only thing that would stop anyone else with such a coat wearing it would be that other people might see them, and you can hardly expect an actor to mind that.

THE rest of my remarks to-day are on some of the better-known types of dog, grouping them not by their breeds—any mug with an illustrated handbook could do that—but by their personalities. Perhaps the best-known type is the yapper—a dog fitted with a high-pitched voice, long legs for whizzing at and round people with, smooth hair so as the better to elude people who would never have thought anyway of trying to get hold of it, and someone a few yards off going all out with a vivacious impression of a dog-owner. The redeeming points of these dogs are that somebody loves them and they are supposed to be

intelligent, but these points in themselves do not distinguish them from any other types.

There is also a small, low, hairy dog with the soul of a yapper but none of its equipment. It can only growl and vibrate with antagonism. Of the dogs which cannot help themselves the most notable is the fat sort whose owners daily risk being waylaid and lectured on dog-management. Such dogs have a slow dignity enhanced by their basically snooky shape, and are obviously a power in the home, with a creaky basket that gets in everyone's way.

Finally I must mention the dog which is this dog's opposite, the eager or family dog which scratches the paint off the bottom of every door and trips over its own feet. If, as often happens, this dog is a mongrel, you may be sure that its owner's friends agree that mongrels are always nicer than thoroughbreds; but this is due not so much to the dog as to the fact that anyone confronted with a confessed mongrel could hardly say anything else.

○ ○

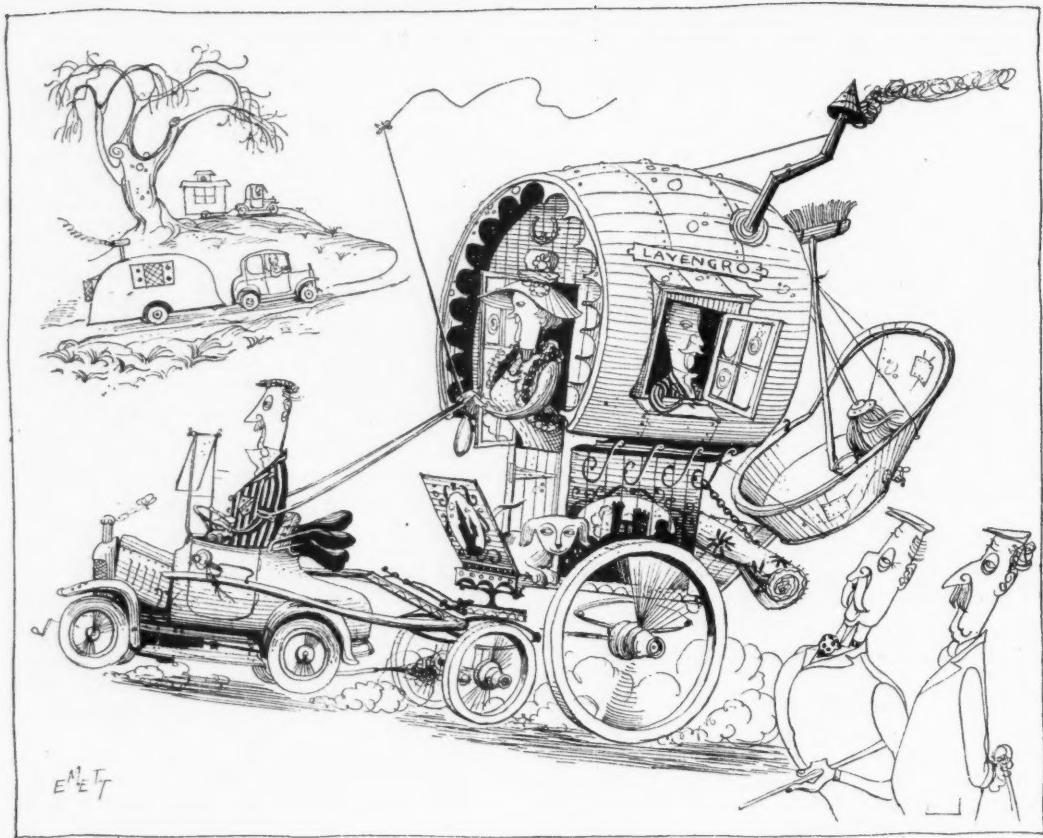
Spring Fashions

WOULD you behold a feast of raiment rare,
A pomp of silks and satins come again—
Old-fashioned truly, as the April rain
And rainbow on the silver, springtide air,
Yet rich above your dreaming—it were vain
To tramp the streets for such transcendent wear,
Haunt base black market and the window-pane
Of beckoning shop: these vestures home elsewhere.

The vernal garniture of ancient trees
At emerald bud-break in a blue-bell wood!
What loom shall weave such magic mysteries
As garb and gown the sylvan multitude
On hills and valleys gleaming? Great and small,
With never coupon needed for them all. E.P.



"... And the last one was a beautiful blonde, and each time she rang the bell it was like heavenly music surgin' in my ears . . ."



"Now THAT'S the idea! If you're going in for this wind-on-the-beath stuff, do it properly."

Global Warfare

(In view of the almost certain repercussions from U.N. the distinguished officer responsible for this lecture prefers to remain anonymous.)

I HAVE come here to-day to talk to you about global warfare. The subject is of paramount importance to us all—paramount importance. No one knows in what quarter of the globe the next war will take place, and if so whether we will be able to cross the Urals. I draw your attention to the Urals, those vast mountainous tracts and so on. Not horse country, not tank country . . . can we cross them? We must ponder deeply on that point.

But we must all think globally—globally. I now turn to the Mediterranean. This is the life-line of our blood-stream, the gateway to the East, *mare nostrum*, if I may coin a phrase. Think of the Suez Canal. I believe I have now explained why we must never lose sight of the Mediterranean.

I think I should mention that it is safe to drink the wines in all countries in the Mediterranean. That point is

worth noting. And while on the subject of wines, it is relevant to mention the R.A.F. The two are connected in so far as they don't go well together. If you drink, you must not fly to excess. I think I have now covered the subject of the R.A.F. in the next war.

Now for atomic warfare. I must touch on atomic warfare. And now for the torpedo. I do not think there will be any torpedoes in the Urals. I hardly think we need consider that any further.

And now for radar. I must touch on radar. But really when we are thinking globally like this we must never forget the slot-flogging soldier—the soot-slogging folder—the foot-slogging soldier. In the words of the Prime Minister the next war will be finished by the slog-sooted folder. And that is as true to-day as it was in Nelson's time.

And then there is the Far East. Do not forget Mongolia. And there I must leave that subject. I have no time to go into it. But I cannot complete a lecture on global Warfare without some reference to the battleship. Never forget that England is still an island. I ask you to ponder that point. We must never forget it. Everyone must have battleships. When each man has a battleship, then we shall be safe; then we shall be able to cross the Urals. Don't let us forget that point.

I think I have covered all the main points about global warfare. I know you will go home and ponder them. Do not forget the horse. The horse has not changed through the centuries. That is significant. With that last point I must leave you, for I have been asked to give this lecture in New York. I am thinking globally and I am confident that you now will too.



THE KING RETURNS.

"His Majesty, his own Most Excellent Ambassador!"

MONDAY, May 5th.—There was what your scribe believes film-fans call a "second feature" atmosphere about the House of Commons to-day. After the excitement of the Cowboys-and-Indians-cum-French-Revolution setting of the Report stage of the Transport Bill last week it was perhaps inevitable that the "documentary" of Third Reading should fall a little flat. Fall flat it certainly did, and the audience was both thin and apathetic.

The plot—that the handing over of all Britain's transport to Government control would be a disaster, or an undiluted blessing, according to the side of the House on which the speaker sat—was a two-hundred-and-twice told tale.

Sir DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE assured the Government that when the Conservatives regain power road haulage will be given its freedom from Government monopoly. This was the only touch of the hero-rescues-heroine in the whole of a rather weary evening's debate.

And of course Signalman WILLIAM WHITELEY (Government Chief Whip to you) got the train into the station to time, and the Third Reading having been accorded, shunted it on to the line marked "Another Place Only," straight to the House of Lords.

Mr. TOM DRIBERG, a bachelor, startled the House by declaring, at Question-time that "the average" British—he said English—housewife was incapable of making a cup of coffee which any American or Frenchman could drink without choking. He did add that the housewife had other qualities which were "admirable"—but the stern glances of the women Members were not appreciably softened by the amendment.

Mr. LENNOX BOYD mentioned the sad case of a customer in a British Restaurant who was sold tea as coffee—and thought it was cocoa. The resultant laughter seemed to suggest that, however unadaptable we may be in other culinary matters, new methods of serving chestnuts are not beyond the capacity of an Englishman.

TUESDAY, May 6th.—Mr. CHURCHILL was back in the House (and in form) to-day, and with Mr. HERBERT MORRISON facing him across the Table and both of them barging for all they were worth, it seemed—as Mr. CHURCHILL put it on a famous occasion—quite like old times. But of that more anon.

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done:

Monday, May 5th.—House of Commons: Transport Bill.
Third Reading.

Tuesday, May 6th.—House of Commons: Ten (Conscripted) Little Nigger Boys.

Wednesday, May 7th.—House of Commons: Conscription Again. House of Lords: Food.

Thursday, May 8th.—House of Commons: Same Again.

At the end of a Question-time which began with Sir THOMAS MOORE turning up his collar and pleading hopefully but vainly for a little space-heating in the Chamber, Mr. HUGH GAITSKELL, of the Ministry of Fuel, put a small gift on the Table for children under three and people over seventy. The order against the use of electricity or gas for space-heating until the end of September is to be relaxed in favour of those two classes of the community. It will also be relaxed where heat is necessary to dry what Mr. GAITSKELL tactfully called "wearing apparel"—mostly for the under-threes.



Impressions of Parliamentarians

4. Mrs. Braddock (Liverpool Exchange)

This announcement was received with general cheers, but Mr. ANTHONY EDEN pointed out that even people between the ages of three and seventy were capable of feeling the icy blasts of a British summer. To which Mr. GAITSKELL replied that, while that might mean discomfort, it was not hardship.

Mr. ALPASS, who is clearly more observant than tactful, promptly pointed out that a couple of big fires blazed in the anteroom to the Chamber, and asked who had licensed them. Mr. GAITSKELL merely shrugged.

Shocked by Mr. EDEN's lack of due thankfulness for small mercies, Major

TUFTON BEAMISH voiced the thanks and "great satisfaction" of those just over three—who could look forward to being warm again when they were seventy. It may of course have been ironical.

Then Mr. CHURCHILL and Mr. MORRISON staged their well-known double turn, the patter turning mainly on the question whether the planned reduction of the compulsory national service period from eighteen months to twelve should be discussed to-night or to-morrow. Mr. MORRISON thought, on the whole, to-night. Mr. CHURCHILL thought, beyond question, to-morrow. Mr. MORRISON thought it would be a good idea to see how they got on. It so happened that the discussion was put off till to-morrow. The preceding discussions happened to last so long that any other course was impossible.

The House engaged in a sort of Ten-Little-Nigger-Boys game with the Bill. As drawn, the measure applied to England, Scotland and Wales, but not to Northern Ireland. Various Members wanted Ireland included, but Scotland and Wales left out.

Mr. CLEMENT DAVIES, from Montgomeryshire, announced that the people of Wales would volunteer for anything, but would not be driven or dragooned. Mr. CARMICHAEL, from Glasgow, took much the same line about Scotland. Both exemption proposals were defeated.

But the Northern Ireland Members took precisely the opposite line, and proclaimed their belief that Ulster was "insulted" by not being compelled to serve in the armed forces. Just why, nobody explained very clearly—but as it was an Irish debate nobody pressed very hard for this detail.

The climax was as Hibernian as the debate. As soon as the proposal was put to the House all the supporters rushed out to the division lobby, with the result that there was nobody left to shout a challenge when, on putting it a second time (according to the rules), Sir CHARLES MACANDREW, in the Chair, declared the proposal defeated. So there was no division.

An', begorrah! it might have been a foine foight too.

WEDNESDAY, May 7th.—Wearing the sort of smile "The Dook" probably wore when he had overcome the scruples of Private Samuel Small about picking up his moosket and had directed battle to commence, Mr. CHURCHILL strode into the Commons



"Julius, you ought to write a book."

to-day ready for the fight over the eighteen months or twelve.

Mr. A. V. ALEXANDER, the Minister of Defence, himself no mean fighter, sat opposite watchfully. It was Mr. ALEXANDER who fired the first shot. He said the cut from eighteen months to twelve had been made after consideration of the country's economic situation and its shortage of manpower.

"But why the change within forty-eight hours after the division on the Second Reading, when an influential minority of Government supporters rebelled against the Bill?" asked the entire Opposition, in forte-fortissimo chorus.

The Cabinet had had *advice*, said Mr. ALEXANDER inscrutably. And, anyway, it had considered the question for months. Then why, asked the Opposition, let the House vote for eighteen months at the time of the Second Reading and cut it within a couple of days?

No reply being forthcoming to this query, Mr. CHURCHILL said Mr. ALEXANDER's case was "piffle and poppycock." Mr. CHURCHILL went on to say that Mr. A. ought to be re-titled "Minister of Defence Unless Attacked." He also said that the Government's policy was one of "*volte face*, panic

and scuttle," showing "opportunism and panic-stricken cowardice."

All this was extremely popular with the Conservative back-benches, less so with the Government side. Mr. JAMES CALLAGHAN, a young Government supporter, at once changed the play and himself took the name-part of David in "David and Goliath." He set about Mr. CHURCHILL (Goliath) with a down-rightness that clearly delighted that old war-horse and set the Government benches roaring approval. It was not what he said but the striking way he said it—and many of his hearers took the view that one day David might not unfittingly take the rôle of Goliath in some big Parliamentary production.

Mr. ALEXANDER, speaking again, claimed that the Government's proposal was a good and reasonable one, and then Mr. WILLIAM WHITELEY spoke for five seconds—but his speech was conclusive. He said: "I beg to move that the Question be now put!" After a good deal of shouting the closure was carried, the proposal to keep the service period at eighteen months defeated, and the reduced period of twelve months substituted. And that was the end of that.

Over in the Lords, Lord WOOLTON was making the noble flesh creep with an account of a coming food shortage.

Really grim it all sounded, with lists of things that would not be found under or above the counter.

But Lord HENDERSON, with his perfect queue-side manner, assured their lordships, on behalf of the Government, that there was no need for alarm and that some food rations might even be increased, even though the meat ration might have to be cut. Looking as though Shopkeeper HENDERSON had uttered those magic words: "*Could you do with some . . . ?*" noble Lords hurried home.

Their fellow-legislators in the Commons settled down more or less comfortably to consider further details of the Conscription Bill, and somewhere about 2 A.M. Mr. ALEXANDER announced that as things were behind schedule they must get on a bit before they went home. So, heavy-eyed and weary, the House sat until a few minutes before midday on

THURSDAY, May 8th, when, after a couple of hours' break, the Bill was discussed some more and progress was made. Truth to tell, nobody seemed inclined to argue about details, but somehow the sitting contrived to wend its weary way. Judging by the smile on the face of Tiger ALEXANDER, the measure is now up to schedule.



"I know, I know—in Southampton it's 'Salisbury Steaks,' in Salisbury it's 'Cambridge Steaks,' and in Cambridge it's 'Oxford Steaks'—nobody dares to take the blame."

The Cosmic Mess

Strike News

"STRIKES" and demonstrations by children against the price of sweets are the latest thing in Canada, this column sees. One account spoke of a "procession of children bearing banners protesting against inflation". Bless them! It is *not* true, this column believes, that the Cradle Club have issued a stern pronouncement on the Theory of Rent: but it is known that there is serious unrest among the under-elevens concerning multilateral trends in economic thought and many are openly questioning the wisdom of Bretton Woods. They base their view-point, of course, on the essentiality of an optimum integration within the framework of regional dispersal of function. Bless them, too.

But in the busy world of strikes the two most favourite themes are still "redundancy" and "Sack-the-Boss". The cry of "anti-redundancy", this column learns, is going very big among those who write, or used to write, books. They have long been accustomed to having their books bombed by the Germans, to a shortage of paper, an insufficiency of binders and printers,

and a near-absence of binding cloth. Now, by Government action, the supply of coal to the paper-mills has been cut down, and the production of a book is practically a pre-Caxton operation. Nearly every book-writer, therefore, having become synthetically redundant, the question arises whether those writers who can still earn a living—journalists, for example—should not come out on strike in sympathy with their less fortunate brothers. After all, as the London dockers said about the strike of the Glasgow dockers, it may be their turn next. All this explains the queer war-cry you may have seen scribbled here and there in Fleet Street:

SOLIDARITY FOR DE-REDUNDANTIZATION.

The De-redundant Writers' Unofficial Defence Committee have summoned a mass-meeting in Trafalgar Square next Sunday, when some new matters may be on the agenda. There is, for example, the question of borrowing books. Figures given in *The Times* by Mr. Tom Harrison, of "Mass Observation"—No, no! beg pardon.

To be in the fashion, this column should put that thus:

Shocked were leading book-writers when Mass-Observationist Tom Harrison publicized show-down figures on the book-borrowing racket. Hissed he:

"Of those with elementary school education 57 per cent. say they never buy a book, of those with secondary, or higher education, 31 per cent. *But nearly half of these got their books primarily from libraries.*

"In a very detailed local survey undertaken for Tottenham Borough Library, 59 per cent. gave libraries as their main book source, 23 per cent. borrowing from friends, and 17 per cent. buying."

So now we know:

	Per cent.
Buying	17
Borrowing:	
(a) from libraries..	59
(b) from friends....	23
	—
	99

You will observe, by the way, that 1 per cent. is missing. This column is not surprised, for it always checks

these percentage arguments, and there are generally more missing than one. In this case, of course, the 1 per cent. is the little fellow who gets his books by *stealing*, but asked not to be put in the papers. This column sees no reason why he should not be mentioned, and will fearlessly give the correct figures in full:

	<i>Per cent.</i>
Buying	17
Borrowing	82
Stealing	1
	<hr/> 100

No figures are given for those borrowers who do not return the book, but *pass it on—possibly sell it—to someone else*—a significant and indeed a deadly group in the book-writer's calculations. Is it any wonder that so many book-writers regard themselves as increasingly redundant and pick up a livelihood in Fleet Street, the films, the B.B.C., or the House of Commons instead? Only seventeen in every hundred book-users buy a book for themselves. The rest borrow it, sometimes for twopence, but most often for nothing from a public library or friend. The same book may be lent, and borrowed, one hundred times, may be enjoyed by the families of all the

borrowers: but the wretched author will receive a single "royalty"—of 6d. say, or possibly 1s.

What other trade, say the incensed de-redundantizationists, would care to carry on upon such terms? Who would labour to produce socks or ties or braces if 82 per cent. of the haberdashery-users said that they borrowed their socks from friends or municipal sock-lenders? Every time a book is lent—hiss they—at least by a library, some small fee should be set aside for the authors—and even the publishers. Then there are those delightful persons the secondhand book-sellers. Logically, they should pay more than the libraries, but they do at least help to keep alive the theory and practice of book-buying, and there is much to be said for them. But two additions, at least, should be made to the criminal code:

(1) Either a fine—or else a contribution to the Authors' Fund—on any book-seller who sells a book presented and inscribed to a Third Party by the Author.

(2) A term of imprisonment for the Third Party, the wretch, the ingrate, the insensitive lout, who, having received a Work with a loving, respectful message from the Author, either gives it away without removing the

inscription (3 months) or sells it to a secondhand fellow (9 months).

"Hullo, old chap! I bought a book of yours the other day. Secondhand, of course."

"Very decent of you. What did you pay?"

"Sixpence. In the Charing Cross Road."

"Ha, ha! Did you like it?"

"Haven't read it, old boy. Matter of fact, I was interested by your inscription on the fly-leaf. 'To old —' it was. With your affectionate something or other."

"Ha!"

Anyone with sufficient sensibility to guess the feelings of the Author during such a conversation will heartily support the platform at the great meeting on Sunday. What exactly the Authors are going to do, the Authors themselves do not know; but, then, they seldom do. One idea is to "Sack the Boss". But what Boss? One Resolution sent in (by the Sussex Writers) suggests that "the President of the Board of Trade is redundant". But that is mere trifling.

Meanwhile, unofficially, no doubt, this column is treating the tiresome demands of the Inland Revenue as comparatively redundant. A.P.H.

o o

Lady Addle and Her Fan Mail

Bengers, Herts, 1947

MY DEAR, DEAR READERS,—I have been going through what I believe is called my "fan mail." Mipsie told me the somewhat strange phrase, and then added laughingly that so far as she was concerned all mails were her fans, which left me more mystified still. However, I understand the general expression to mean the letters of appreciation one receives from readers—and a very precious collection they are, I assure you, to me.

I keep them in a beautiful old marquetry box which once contained my dear mother's senna pods. Other valued relics lie beside them: A dance-programme of the season when I became engaged to Addle, showing his name *three times* on the card—he was very hot-blooded and dashing in those days; locks of my three children's hair, tied up with pink ribbon, and of four of Addle's prize sows tied up with blue. Mipsie's two divorce papers are also there. It is curious that she does not want to preserve them herself, yet the reason shows the nobleness of her nature. She says that when a marriage is finished she does not wish to dwell on the past, which usually contains

bitterness. She is only interested in her alimony, which is in the present tense and represents a happier side than the sad thoughts of *autrefois*. "A live dividend is better than two dead vows," she says, with that innate wisdom that makes her so outstanding a personality.

But to return to my letters. These I divide into three classes: the first, letters from my own personal friends, the second class from unknown friends and admirers, and the third—happily a small number—from my critics.

The first group are easy to pick out, with their superfine notepaper and their coronets on the envelopes. They have given me great joy, as they show so much real affection, besides the courage of the old *noblesse*. My lifelong friend "Prickie" Padlock (Patricia, Countess of Padlock) wrote, when I first bared to the world the secrets of my Domestic Front:

"DEAREST BLANCHE,—You are doing a splendid work. But surely one that is not fair to dear Addle, who must enjoy your company more than your cooking. Do let me find you a cook. I would willingly sacrifice my own—a Peruvian gipsy who is wonderful

at her national dishes, which are not like anything else one has ever tasted. I think you two would be culinary twin souls! The only thing to be careful about is never to turn your back in the kitchen. Her father was an assassin, and sometimes the sight of a knife brings back her youth. But she is really a dear, and so hardworking—she is singlehanded now as both the other maids are laid up, having stupidly, in spite of my warnings, turned round in the kitchen. Would you like to try her, dear Blanche? I would gladly pay her fare, or even send her over by car, using our precious petrol, in order to help you. . . ."

I was touched by her letter—the last I ever received from her, as she died from some mysterious accident soon afterwards—but I felt it my duty to continue in my kitchen work.

Another friend, Lady Unction, wrote: "MY DEAR LADY ADDLE,—How I do feel for you in your troubles. Here all is *chaos* too. An insurance company in the east wing, a bank in the west ditto. Evacuees in the kennels, the A.T.S. in the stables and Unction's fox-hounds in the ballroom (as the stables were too damp). There is nothing left



"Whose is the milk?"

for us except the centre, and I doubt if we could put up twenty people now—not that I have much *heart* for entertaining in these terrible times."

I cannot quote all these letters, any more than I can give more than one or two samples of what perhaps is the section nearest my heart—letters from my unknown public. These range from doctors—one young practitioner wrote that most of his gastric patients were devoted students of my recipes and he was so grateful to me—so I conclude that my dietetic advice must have been beneficial—to the poorest and humblest workman, such as one old pensioner in Yorkshire, who wrote:

"*MY LADY*,—I write respectfully to say how much I like your ladyship's cooking bits in *Punch*, which my dotor, what lives in Grt Bengers gets from her lady and sends me on. If I had the fare to come to Hertfordshire (£3 4s. 9d., say £4 doing it proper) I would like to see the place your Ladyship lives in which my dotor would show me.

Respectfully yours, MR. BRAWN."

It was a great joy to send the dear old man £5 and to invite him and his daughter to Bengers, though it was sad that they could not stay for tea, when I had taken pains to cook them some of my famous grated turnip crumpets for the occasion.

I have a special little bundle of clergymen, done up in narrow mauve ribbon—but I am always a trifle worried as to whether I am right in keeping in the same packet one Roman Catholic priest and two Dissenting ministers. I know my dear mother would have felt it very wrong to associate anything that smacked of Rome with our own Church, while my father used to say that "Nonconformity was all very well for Liberals, but not for gentlemen."

I feel, however, that these views may be a little extreme, and I am glad to have this instinct proved right by the recent discovery that an ancestor of ours was a distant cousin of Martin Luther—who of course started as a Roman Catholic, though he afterwards became Anglican—or was it Presbyterian?

As for the last section, the writers were of course mistaken, but one must not be uncharitable. Perhaps they mean well. There is one letter accusing me of being a Fascist, and one saying that when the rivers of blood start to flow Mipsie's head will be the first to fall—would that be a Communist possibly? Another reader tells me that I am a snob, which is the most absurd notion when the hallmark of a Coot is that we will descend to speak to people of any class, high or lowly.

The only letter, however, that I cannot and will not forgive is one saying that Addle's pigs are of poor quality and only win prizes in local shows because of personal influence. I have not dared to show my husband this wicked calumny. Instead, I have cheered him immensely by the news that no fewer than thirty-six admirers have called their pigs after him, while fifteen hens, five goats, and one dear little donkey, I am proud to say, have been named Blanche by some of my dear, dear readers.

M. D.

OKLAHOMA! comes to Drury Lane sponsored by the Theatre Guild and fresh from heady triumphs in the States. Its reputation is justified. So smooth a flow of perfectly harnessed pep is something from which some of our native purveyors of song and dance can certainly learn. The story is the straight, simple, honest-humoured stuff of love on an upland farm, but the all-American posse of spring-heeled cowboys and bright-eyed dairymaids which puts over its rolling numbers have a vigour and accuracy which will make London sit up. They sing as if they had one voice, and what a voice it is! Clean colours are used sparingly with uncommon effect. Whether the stage is crowded with frisking rustics or cleared deftly for romantic action what strikes one all the time is the extraordinary abundance of vitality. Wit is not on the menu, but the show fairly pulses.

Against this unsophisticated background is set in high relief a slice of pure *Cold Comfort Farm*. A hired hand, full of awkward frustrations, lurks in as nasty a wood-shed as Miss Gibbons ever carpentered. It might be considered an unpleasant episode, only its ugliness is quickly blown away by prairie breezes. Will this Freudian personage get the better of the lovely *Laurey*, or will she reach the altar with the hard-riding, hair-triggered, lion-hearted *Curly*? Musical comedy provides but one answer. I must say our sympathies are unduly engaged for the warped condition of the monster considering the ruthlessness of his end. His brooding shadow produces in the innocent *Laurey* a nightmare in which the Can-can pin-ups on his wall emerge to assist in a primitive duel between the Good Man and the Bad. As a bizarre ballet this is brilliantly devised, and the fact that the Good Man is able to walk off the stage after the murderous treatment he is handed out is a wonderful testimonial to the resilience of the human body. Crazy dancing, exceedingly accomplished, is a feature of the piece. Mr. OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN wrote it, Mr. ROUBEN MAMOUlian produced, Mr. RICHARD RODGERS did

the music, much of which is good enough to be whistled to you by the baker's boy, and Miss AGNES DE MILLE looked after the cavorts. All knew their business. If I only mention Miss BETTY JANE WATSON, Mr. HAROLD KEEL and Miss DOROTHEA MACFARLAND on the players' side as being equally conversant with theirs it is simply on account of space. And if I say of Miss MACFARLAND that she brings the human voice nearer to the buzz-saw than any other singer I have

At the Play

OKLAHOMA! (DRURY LANE)—WE PROUDLY PRESENT
(DUKE OF YORK'S)—LESS THAN KIND (ARTS)



[Oklahoma!]

COME TO OKLAHOMA FOR CHANGE AND VITALITY.

been subjected to I think I can do so without fear of coco-cola for one, not only because she has a kind face but because every now and then in her astonishing flights of satire she fails to disguise vocal charms of a high order.

Mr. IVOR NOVELLO gets surprisingly little fun out of the battle of theatrical management, in *We Proudly Present*, at the Duke of York's. His two stage-struck youths back from the Army ambitious to inject a little adrenaline into the flagging body of Shaftesbury Avenue lose no time in running into the shocks that thoroughfare is heir to, not the least the tantrums of their leading

lady, but their adventures make only a thin and somewhat conventional comedy. Jests about the Ivy and about various stage personalities, including Mr. NOVELLO, abound, but considering how well he knows his subject he might have given it a sharper slant. Nor does he convince us for a moment that any management, however innocent, would submit to being barred from its own stage while a Bloomsbury soul-twister under production is rehashed into a roaring burlesque. Miss ENA BURRILL, Miss MARY JERROLD (in an unworthy part), Mr. ANTHONY FORWOOD and Mr.

PETER GRAVES extract mild fun, Miss

IRENE HANDL gets a big laugh as an exuberant continental, and in a performance of real strength Miss PHYLLIS MONKMAN tries gallantly to obscure the loose stitches binding a series of Green Room turns into a play.

At the Arts Mr. NORMAN MARSHALL, who brought M. FRANÇOIS MAURIAC's *Asmodée* to the Gate in 1939, now gives us the same author's *Les Mal Aimés*, under the title *Less Than Kind*. Sir BASIL BARTLETT's translation seems good, but this is a disappointing production of a play which calls for very careful acting by a cast with temperamental range if its emotional precision is not to be blurred. M. MAURIAC works on the human spirit like a surgeon, uncovering layer after layer of sentiment and instinct in a patient search for truth. Here he takes a possessive father living with two daughters, adds

a young man, and with their interplay of jealousy and passion creates an atmosphere which could clearly in the right hands become electric. It would help if we could believe we were in France, but Frenchness is curiously absent. For anything the cast suggests to the contrary this might be a forgotten chunk of Ibsen. Although she looks utterly Scandinavian, Miss ANNABEL MAULE comes nearest to meeting the play's special demands. Miss MARGARET DIAMOND is the other sister, Mr. RALPH TRUMAN *Papa*, and Mr. DAVID PEEL the spark which ignites the *de Virelade* tinder.

ERIC.



"You realize, I suppose, that this makes us Civil Servants."

Our Booking Office (By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Lady Novelists

THIS delightfully written study of the lady novelists of the Victorian age (*A Victorian Album*, by LUCY POATE-STEBBINS: SECKER AND WARBURG, 12/6) is equally free from ironic condescension and from the nostalgic sentimentality which characterizes most writing about the Victorians nowadays. In her first chapter Mrs. STEBBINS deals with a number of minor novelists, whom she arranges in three groups, those who could live in accordance with Victorian standards only by sternly repressing themselves; those who were perfectly at their ease within the barriers erected by public opinion, and took as much pleasure as their readers in the unreal world they created in their writings; and, thirdly, the unpretentious, indefatigable business women who toiled at their novels with unflagging energy, sometimes alone, sometimes in partnership with a son or husband. The four chief women novelists of the age, Charlotte Brontë, Mrs. Gaskell, George Eliot and Margaret Oliphant, are shown by the author to have had many points in common with their less gifted contemporaries. Charlotte Brontë, for example, indulged the unbridled fantasy of the romances she wrote as a girl even in her most mature work, side by side with the superb portrayal of such a character as Paul Emanuel. George Eliot found herself constrained to infringe the Victorian standards she upheld so tenaciously in her work. Both she and Mrs. Gaskell derived much comfort and assistance from their self-effacing mates; and Mrs. Oliphant, with a strain of genius, sacrificed the possibility of great work to an unnecessarily high standard of living.

H. K.

Mr. Penn's Holy Experiment

Americans have taken to writing biographies of their home towns. A publisher has portrayed Milwaukee, a novelist *Philadelphia* (RICH AND COWAN, 25/-). Lured by William Penn's attractive but conscientious prospectus, Charles II's England sailed to colonize the banks of the Delaware—adults £6, children 50/-, sucklings free. The Quaker settlement offered sanctuary to all God-fearing men, and thrived on its tolerance. Of course it had its setbacks. Addison's *Cato*, like the films, "drew great sums of money from weak and inconsiderate people." Indian raids invited reprisals, and there was scalping on both sides. Slaves went shockingly cheap after the Monmouth Rebellion. But on the whole it is a very creditable story that the biographer brings so entertainingly up to the present day. Although (or because?) Philadelphia's famous sons, from Benjamin West to Edwin Abbey, have loved England, Mr. STRUTHERS BURT is inclined to differ. He has the right Nuremberg attitude towards the "traitor" who held a city gate for King George and was hanged, and as little pleasure in Cobbett as Cobbett had in Philadelphia. He is worried, too, because the English think "Way down upon the Suwannee River" an English folk-song. But do they? And in any case what can be done about a city that still persists in calling its "sidewalks" pavements?

H. P. E.

"A Dress or a Bit Tune . . ."

Herself by birth a Haldane, Mrs. NAOMI MITCHISON, in her long novel—*The Bull Calves* (CAFE, 15/-)—about the political and sociological disturbances in Scotland between the '15 and the '45, and the difficult period of readjustment between Highlands and Lowlands immediately thereafter, has hit on a brilliant device. For heroine she takes Kirstie Duncan, an ancestress of hers who, in fact, died young. By imagining the kind of life the earlier Haldane might have lived, Mrs. MITCHISON, with a vast deal of historical detail at her finger-tips, gives the book almost the force of autobiography; for temperamentally the Haldanes—the "bull calves" of her title—seem to have changed little in two hundred years. But as Kirstie herself says: ". . . minding on a thing that's far back, the like of yon, you will not have it clear, only maybe here and there, a dress or a bit tune . . ." To a Sassenach ear the bit tune Mrs. MITCHISON gives us is unco' like the skirl of the pipes heralding a Burrs Nicht haggis: a dish which is halesome, no doubt, but, served helping after helping with no wee drappie of wit, becomes a trifle tedious. A further hundred and twenty-five pages of notes compel the greatest respect for the author's earnest thoroughness without materially adding to one's enjoyment of her tale. R. C. S.

Food, and How To Get It.

A French workman's garden seldom stops at his exquisitely-ranged vegetables and salads, his cordon pears and his standard peach-trees. There are usually rabbits, living like Diogenes in wine-barrels; certainly hens; and probably fat—not fancy—pigeons. This, in miniature, is the mixed agriculture that Lady (LOUISE) HOWARD recommends us to emulate if we want plenty of healthy food. To prevent food becoming increasingly scarce and unwholesome, every estate should be a true unit of husbandry, with an appropriate balance of livestock and crops, and its own wastes returned to maintain its fertility. Lady HOWARD, formerly chief of the Agricultural Service of the International Labour Office at Geneva, has written *The Earth's Green Carpet* (FABER, 8/6) to provide a layman's

introduction to this policy as initiated by her husband, Sir Albert. She describes the methods that have impoverished the earth: the temperate zone's erosion by incessant wheat-crops, the leaching of fertility in the tropics by oil-seed exports. This gloomy picture is off-set by feats of conservation and reclamation: Chinese rice-fields, Japanese forests and the European experiments deriving from the Indore system of composting animal and vegetable wastes. No one who has taken to compost farming, or gardening, has, she says, been known to regret it. Her lucid and inspiring book—and an excellent bibliography—bear out the claim.

H. P. E.

Two Manxmen

In *Two Men of Manxland* (THE NORRIS MODERN PRESS, DOUGLAS, ISLE OF MAN, 15/-) Mr. SAMUEL NORRIS has given a somewhat rambling but sincere, painstaking and interesting account of Hall Caine and T. E. Brown, the two most famous of modern Manxmen. Mr. NORRIS does not devote much more than a fifth of the book to Hall Caine, with whom he was acquainted, and of whom he clearly finds it difficult to write with much enthusiasm. In his more diffident moods Hall Caine believed that he looked like Shakespeare, a resemblance which, according to a writer in *The Idler*, conclusively established the Baconian authorship of the plays. The immense popularity of his novels was dwindling before the first world-war, and he is only a name to the present generation. Even in the Isle of Man itself, Mr. NORRIS tells us, his memory is not kept very green. T. E. Brown was a very different character, with a real love for the Isle of Man, richly illustrated in this book. Yet, in spite of Mr. NORRIS, his best poem is "Clifton." A master at Clifton for thirty years, he has given in these lines memorable expression to a mood familiar to all schoolmasters; but his verse in Manx dialect, though charming enough, is much too diffuse. H. K.

Plans that Work.

Did you suspect the limpet, gummed obstinately to its rock, of an active underwater life that can take it so relatively vast a distance as three feet, an adventure from which it returns, by what species of radar we do not know, to exactly the same pitch on the same rock? Are you aware that the ordinary green leaf is an extremely complex sun-driven strike-free food-factory? And have you ever considered the example in co-operation set us by the hermit-crab and the sponge, who find mutual benefit in partnership, the crab getting cover and the sponge whatever may be left over from the crab's lunch? With such exciting information *Nature's Year* (LONGMANS, 7/6) is as richly stored as any squirrel's larder. Miss MARIBEL EDWIN's aim is to describe in a brief compass what happens through the seasons to the machinery of British wild life, and out of the changing chemistry and habits of all its creatures, animal and vegetable, she has made a delightful little book which should please nearly everyone above the age of ten. More than a hundred excellent photographs are included. It is not just another dull treatise by a scientist, but a very readable account of the way our friends out of doors adapt themselves to the urgent problems of growth and nourishment and population and cold and heat. They do this so much better than we do that once again we are driven to wonder if the northern peoples would not be wiser to retire from the losing struggle to keep warm and adopt the attractive remedy of a long winter sleep.

E. O. D. K.

Twisting the Enemy's Tail.

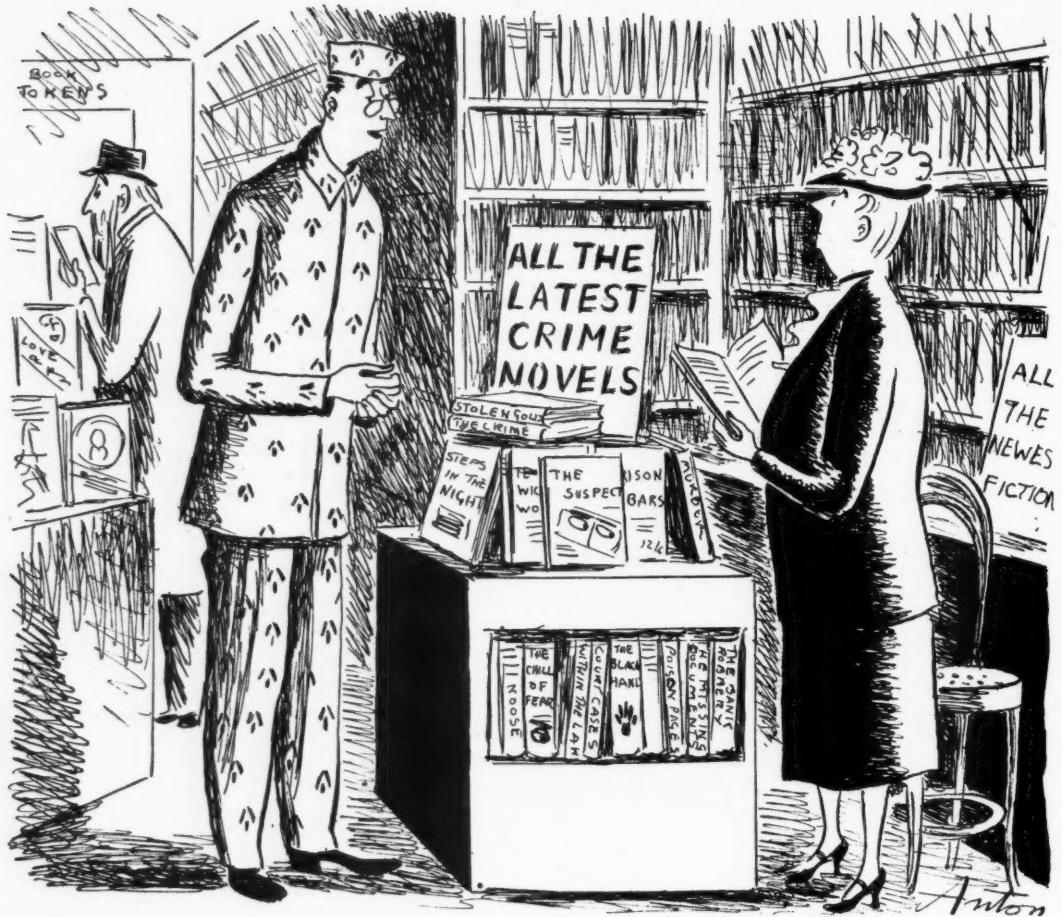
It seems a long time since we heard of the last enterprise of H.M.S. *Campbeltown* on March 28th 1942, when she was used to ram the dock gates at St. Nazaire and deprive the *Tirpitz* of her only possible dock on the Atlantic seaboard. Now in *The Attack on St. Nazaire* (JOHN MURRAY, 6/-) Commander R. E. D. RYDER, V.C., who was in command of the naval operation, has written the full story of the raid and proved, beyond doubt, that it was necessary and successful. The story begins with the elaborate preparations, which included the most cunning covering plans—tropical kit was observed on a quayside and (in order to interest any enemy agent at Falmouth) a ship, crowded with supernumeraries and "known" to have commandos on board was conspicuous in the harbour until after the expedition had returned. The whole account is written clearly and dispassionately and made understandable by many maps and photographs. The losses were 359 officers and men (of whom one hundred and forty-four lost their lives), one old destroyer and fourteen coastal craft—"A small price to pay in war for such an achievement," writes Admiral Sir CHARLES FORBES, G.C.B., D.S.O., in a preface which comments on the modesty of the author and opines that all his decisions were absolutely correct. It is a most generous book, and though it may be of more importance to tacticians than to the general reader, it deserves to be read and remembered by all as a piece of amazing history.

B. E. B.

Kentish Pie, published in aid of the Kent Appeals for the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association and the National Association of Boys' Clubs, is an enterprising magazine with contributions by many distinguished writers. It costs 2/6, and is well worth the money.



"Hello—Molesworth is in love."



"Can I help you, madam?"

A Journalist Remembers

III

IN the world of journalism," said Mr. McGargle, editor of *The Plough*, "to stand still is to retreat. *Toujours l'audace!* I intend to start an Angling column. You shall conduct it."

"But," I said, "I know nothing about angling!"

"That is neither here nor there," he replied. "Read it up. I have arranged a week-end for you with General Hopple, a keen fisherman. Master the sport and impress Hopple with your personality. I have hopes that he will issue weekly permits to the winners of competitions which you must organize in the column. I understand that *Byre and Stall* have something similar in hand, so we must lose no time."

Mr. McGargle explained that the first essential was to acquire the jargon of the sport. "I remember," he said, "being invited by the laird of Auchtermuchty for a day's fishing on the Truckle. He was a keen fisherman, though over eighty years of age, and we shared the first pool—he at the tail, supported by two keepers, and I at the head. Almost immediately I hooked a fish and cried out in my ignorance: 'I've got one on the end!' He wrenches himself free from his attendants and, tottering up the pool, endeavoured to strike me with his landing-net. It left a nasty taste in my mouth, and yet all would have been avoided by a little preliminary reading."

I lost no time in making myself

acquainted with a varied selection of angling literature and in buying the necessary equipment. When I set off for my week-end with General Hopple I felt that I could hold my own among fishermen, in conversation at least.

In the train I noticed that the only other occupant of the compartment appeared to be bound on an errand similar to mine, since the luggage-rack was piled with a rod-case, landing-net, fishing-basket and other impedimenta. He was deeply immersed in a book, phrases from which he seemed to be murmuring to himself.

"I hope," I said boldly, "that before many hours have passed that basket will have received the first glittering trophy, fresh from the tide. Allow me

to introduce myself: Monroe of *The Plough*."

He put his book aside with a slight start. "I'm looking forward to the quickening heartbeat as a dark fin breaks the surface of the stream," he replied. "Peet of *Byre and Stall*."

Luckily I had been well schooled by Mr. McGargle in meeting the unexpected situation with aplomb. "Nothing looks worse than a staring, open-mouthed journalist," he used to say. I coolly removed my spectacles, breathed on them, and polished them with my handkerchief.

"The sea-trout of the Hoddle," I said casually, "are among the gamest fish that swim. General Hopple and I hope to make a heavy basket."

"Tight lines, tight lines!" he exclaimed with an unpleasant leer. "All the more so as I hope to share your sport. Ah, how one thrills as the rod bends, the reel screams, and a foot-long bar of silver hurls itself out of the depths!"

As I heard this unwelcome news it was as much as I could do to cover my involuntary cry of rage by humming a few notes of "The Wolf," and since in my agitation I began in far too low a key, my performance did not convey the air of easy indifference at which I aimed. For the rest of the journey I remained silent.

We were met by General Hopple, who appeared to be rather wild and excitable in his manner as he urged us into a smart dog-cart. "We have a perfect fly-water, gentlemen," he said. "There is not a moment to lose." At a furious gallop we sped towards the river, the General laying on his whip like a madman. His rod, ready mounted, stood beside him and as, at a sudden burst of sunshine, he commenced, with an oath, an attempt to change his flies, I huddled fearfully into my corner of the swaying vehicle, expecting disaster at every instant. Worse was to follow, for the General, speaking rather indistinctly through a couple of brightly-coloured flies which he held temporarily in his mouth, ordered us to don our waders and brogues. Peet tried to put him off with some stuff about "the quiet pipe as the eye roves over the stream, noting here an eddy, there a stately glide," but he was adamant. "Not a moment must be wasted!" he said. How we completed the operation successfully I am unable to say, but I remember that at one point our confusion was such that I spent some time in trying to force Peet's foot into one of my brogues. I cannot be sufficiently thankful that the General was himself ready for the river.

At last the journey was over, and we were soon following our host as he led the way at a half-run along the bank. As we went, he pointed out noteworthy features of the river. Of one pool he said that it held good fish, but that one had to beware of snags.

"Snags can be of many kinds," I said quickly, "submerged twigs, overhanging branches, sharp ledges of rock against which the line may be cut, etcetera, etcetera."

"Quite, quite," panted the General, and I could not resist darting a triumphant glance at Peet.

At last we paused beside a long, deep pool. "There is room for the three of us here," said the General. He directed me to fish the head of the pool and Peet the middle. "I will make what I can of the tail," he said.

Peet and I began to put up our rods. "Even though the day be blank," he said, "the angler, from his contemplation of the peaceful countryside, draws fresh vigour with which to renew the battle of life." His voice seemed to have lost its confident ring, and I noticed with satisfaction that his cast was badly tangled.

By now the General had started to fish, and as I turned towards the head

of the pool his rod bent and he gave a triumphant cry. With a look of relief Peet cast aside his rod. In another moment, landing-net upraised, he was rushing round the General in a welter of foam. As the fish leaped, Peet made vicious slashes at it, and in one of these he had the misfortune to break the cast.

I could not help feeling that this was not the wisest moment to attempt to secure fishing permits for the readers of *Byre and Stall*, but Peet told me afterwards that he had relied on that cameraderie which he thought would be created by the sharing of such an exciting struggle. In this he was mistaken, as the General's abusive refusal showed; nor did a remark about the "consolations of Dame Nature's brightly coloured book" mend matters. We were not told outright to go, but the General made it clear that if Peet remained he would shoot him.

I was not threatened directly, but since, had Peet fallen, I could not have thrown myself into my fishing with unimpaired zest, I determined that we should both make our farewells as gracefully as possible. It was unfortunate, and I felt that Mr. McGargle would not be pleased.



"Why, if it isn't Section Officer Bennett—I didn't recognize you in mufti."

Anybody Want An Obsession?

I DON'T know when it first got a real hold on me—probably during that winter when the buzz-bombs were falling, when I started travelling everywhere by Tube. The first attack I can remember at all vividly occurred on a journey from Finsbury Park to Hammersmith. I was reading a paper when a headline which I had already half-read out of the corner of my eye began to monopolize my attention. It said: COALITION TO STAY. I read the brief article suspended from this banner, found it of no interest and turned back to the column of sporting sidelights. For a moment or two I was absorbed, but suddenly I became aware that the words COALITION TO STAY had transferred themselves from page two to page three and were now superimposed across a paragraph about the future of rowing at Oxford. That gave me quite a start. I folded the paper and tucked it into my pocket.

The man sitting opposite (I remember him so clearly) was a thin fellow, nervous and spent, who looked as though he'd been losing money, weight and sleep and hair for a very long time. He wore a black hat and horn-rimmed glasses and between the hat and the glasses, across his furrowed forehead, were the words COALITION TO STAY in block capitals.

That's how it all started. Since then I suppose I have had at least a dozen attacks and each one has lasted longer than its predecessor. The latest started about three weeks ago when for no discernible reason a cycle-repair outfit suddenly took possession of my mind in a café in Islington. It

is as though the thing had been scratched on to the retina of my inner eye: everywhere I look it is there. I cannot think of anything else for more than a few seconds at a time, and it is driving me mad.

The doctor asked me a lot of irrelevant questions—had I a poor memory as a boy? Could I find any connecting link between the various images which had afflicted me? Was there any cycle-repair outfit in my family? Then he asked me to try an experiment. Would I buy a cycle-repair outfit, the best that money could buy, and then smash it violently and viciously to pulp and powder? I did everything he suggested, but the only change was that the mental image of the thing took on a black-edged emphasis. Still, even that was something.

For several days the doctor probed deeply into my subconscious trying to discover how I had managed to throw off previous obsessions, but he gave it up when he began to see the words COALITION TO STAY stencilled on his bacon-rasher every morning.

His new theory is that my mind is hypersensitive to trivia, that subconsciously I try to corner every common mental experience and run it as a monopoly. He believes—and this is startling, if you like—that only two or three other people in London could possibly have been sufficiently attracted by that headline, COALITION TO STAY, to read and comprehend it, because I had absorbed practically all of its limited dynamism. And from this he argues that no more than a dozen people in Britain can possibly have had

a thought about cycle-repair outfits these past three weeks. If this theory is true I have a terrifying responsibility. Suppose, for example, that I get my claws into that slogan WORK—OR WANT, what happens to the production drive?

Dr. Foskett says there is just one hope. If, as he believes, I am a negative carrier of Mohacheff's "L" I can be neutralized by contact with a double positive charge of Mohacheff's "B." That is why this article has been written. There may be one reader among you who can save me and—who knows?—our beloved country. Will you try? Oh, please, find a cycle-repair outfit in your coffee to-night!

HOD.

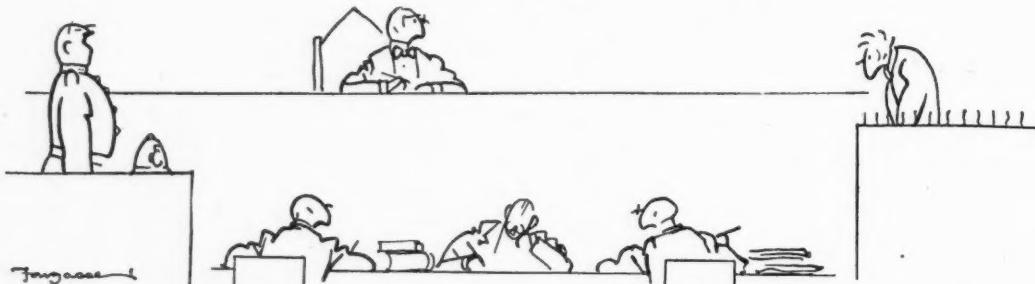
May 1941-47

DO you remember May?
Green radiant meadows; and the
grey
Smoke curtaining the stricken town,
Charred flakes like black snow drifting
down,
Burst sandbags masking bombs, and
glass
Crunching as ambulances pass?

Oh, haloed by the choking dust
From tattered trembling masonry,
There grew a fellowship that must
In civic legend never die.

We, dirty and enduring, stood
In that unvaunted brotherhood
Of wardens, firemen, rescue squads
Who through disaster worked like
gods—

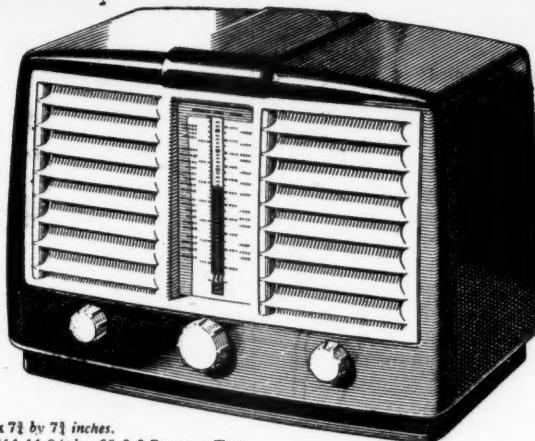
Yes, I remember May,
And my friends who died that day.



"Inciting to commit a felony, your Honour—he was singing 'Keep the Home Fires Burning' in the street."

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B cut off the end

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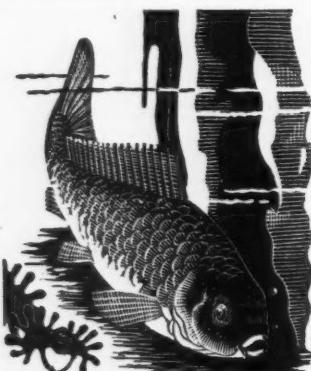
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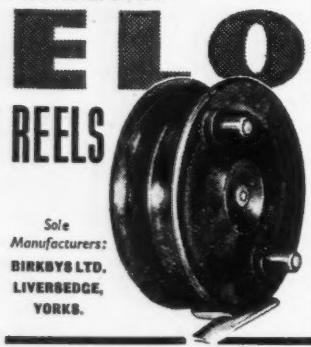
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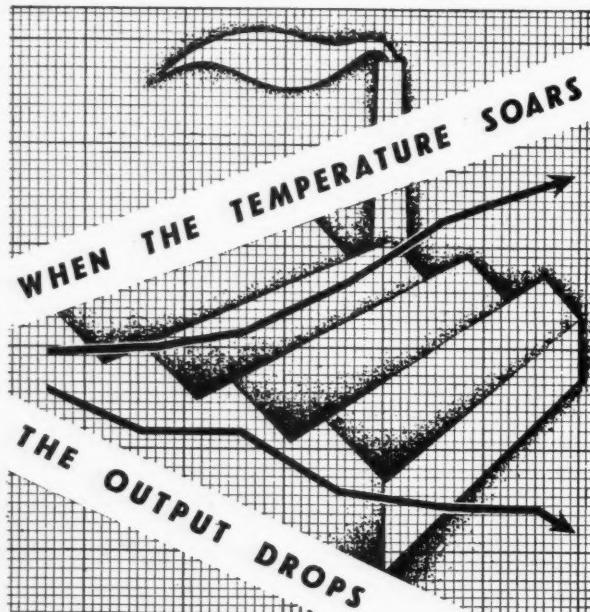


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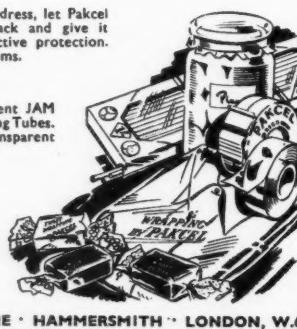
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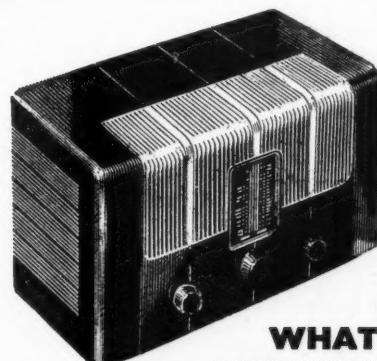
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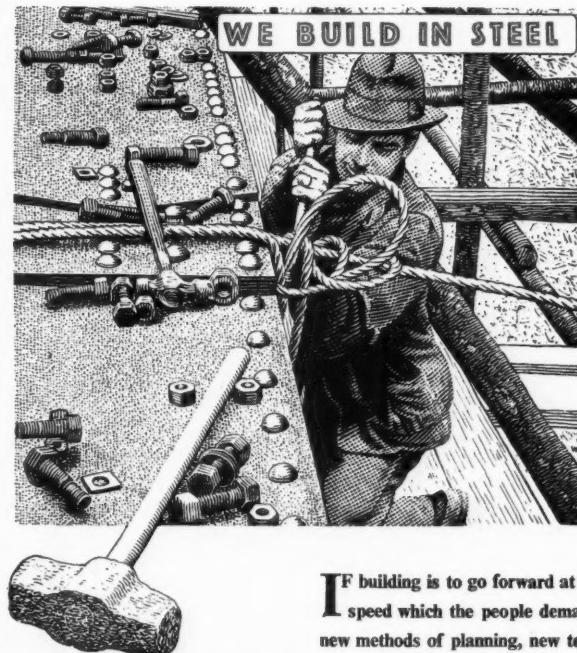
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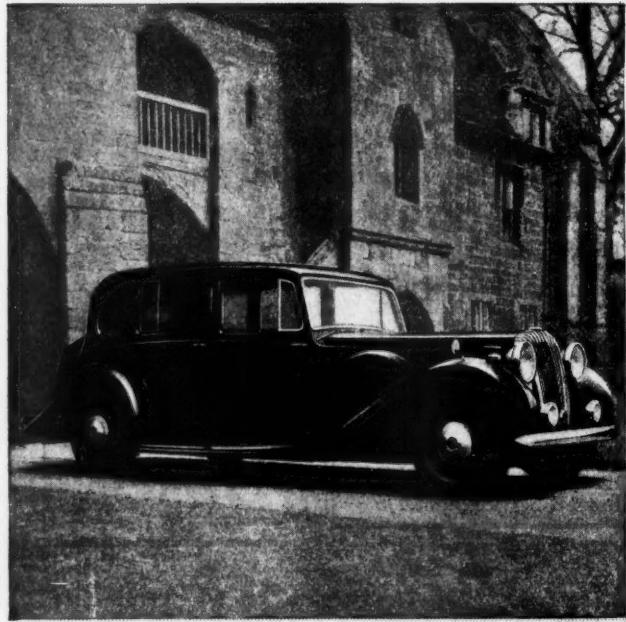
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